

The Vision

Volume 15, Issue 5

“For the VISION is for the days yet to come.” *Daniel 10:14*

May 2022

Do We Talk the Talk or Walk the Walk? By Pastor Larry

In *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg tell this story. A newly promoted colonel had moved into a makeshift office during the Gulf War. He was just getting unpacked when out of the corner of his eye he noticed a private coming his way with a toolbox.

Wanting to seem important, he grabbed the phone. “Yes, General Schwarzkoph, I think that’s an excellent plan.” He continued: “You’ve got my support on it. Thanks for checking with me. Let’s touch base again soon, Norm. Good-bye.”

“And what can I do for you?” he asked the private.

“I’m just here to hook up your phone,” came the rather sheepish reply.

What does it mean to be authentic? How important is it for our feelings and thoughts to match our outside behaviors and actions? Psychologists refer to this as “congruency.” Jesus called it “honesty.” The colonel was pretending to be a close associate of the General, something he clearly was not! His inner disposition did not match his behavior. In a word, he was incongruent! Jesus would call it “hypocrisy.” In the lesson today in Matthew 23:1-12, Jesus talks about “congruence.” In doing so, he exposes both the central vice and virtue of religion. Inauthentic religion suffers from a disconnection between inner motives and practice, while authentic religion is rooted in a strong connection between motives and deeds. The truth is that “pure religion” exists more in our minds than in reality. Behavior is a mix of altruism (selflessness) and egoism (selfishness).

We begin with the Scribes and Pharisees. Christians often take potshots at these leaders, and Jesus was critical of their behavior, but he also realized that a deep truth resonated from their history. It was the belief that the heart of Judaism had been preserved through their traditions. No other groups were so committed to the sacred transmission and preservation of the Law. At times, they had willingly laid down their lives to protect the beauty and sacredness of the Books of Moses. They had created all their rules to “build a fence,” an “Oral Law,” around the Pentateuch to protect its integrity. Jesus is clear to say that the Scribes and Pharisees teachings reflect principles that came from God through Moses. The teachings, preserved in the Ten Commandments, need to be obeyed. They are based on “reverence for God, for God’s name, for God’s day, and for

parents. They are also based on respect, respect for a person’s life, and possessions, and personality, and good name, and for oneself.” (William Barclay, *Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2*, 1956; p. 315) To the Scribes and Pharisees, these principles were binding and valid for all eternity. To that degree, Jesus and the leaders are in sync! So far so good! Then the problems begin!

The whole approach of the Scribes and Pharisees to religion had been swallowed up in hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of rules and regulations. For Jesus, the essence of vital religion had been lost. Their way of life had become a burden to be borne rather than a joy to be lived.

We can debate about various aspects of our faith, but I think we would all agree that any religion,

(continued on page 2)



Do We Talk the Talk or Walk the Walk? continued

ancient or modern, that revels in legalism and impossible expectations, is headed for a spiritual train wreck. When absorbed in the trivial, one loses the forest from the trees! To Jesus, the Scribes and Pharisees have become lost in the forest. They have forgotten what's important, who they are, and how they should be behaving.

People who get lost are often misguided in what they do. We are all familiar with the comic strip *Peanuts*. Snoopy is sitting on top of his dog house with a flock of baby birds. The time had come for the baby birds to learn how to fly, and Snoopy was their teacher. Snoopy flapped his ears and walked to the end of the doghouse. He leaped into the air and continued to flap his ears. Unfortunately, he landed right on his head. He got up onto the roof and shared this lesson: "Do as I say to do and not what I do." In our lesson today, Jesus tells the crowd and his disciples to do what the Pharisees and the Scribes *teach them to do*, "but do not *do as they do*, for they do not practice what they teach" (Matthew 23:3).

The Scribes and the Pharisees have separated themselves from the lives of the ordinary citizen. Yet as Jesus points out, the gauntlet of rules and regulations were not followed by the Scribes and Pharisees. These leaders did not assist the common people in finding ways to apply the Law to daily living. They had developed a religion of ostentation, of "show." After all, if the leaders are saying they follow all of these rules and regulations, and want to give the appearance of doing so, then they needed to demonstrate their piety. How would you know how humble and pious they are unless they show you!

In our lesson, Jesus points out some of their behaviors that show how they want their deeds and

status to be recognized. Their badges include enlarged phylacteries, which were small leather cases worn on the forehead and left arm, and contained important Old Testament texts. Extended fringes or tassels, which were attached to the bottom of their robes, were a symbol of their "bondage" to the Law. They enjoy the attention that they receive in the synagogue, but also in the market place and at social functions. They want to be placed in the front seats where all will see them, a reminder of their respect, honor, and power. Jesus is saying, "Hey, guys! You look great, but you just "talk the talk! You do not walk the talk!"



Jesus goes after the leaders on one more point. He points out that they crave titles such as rabbi, teacher, and instructor. The Scribes and Pharisees demanded respect, even to be treated with greater respect than had been given to their parents. The authorities often said that one's parents had given them ordinary, physical life, but a person's teacher gives them

eternal life. So the leaders even like to be called "father," even as Elisha called Elijah, "father" (2 Kings 2:12).

Chapter 23 of Matthew is a "stealth narrative." What I have been describing sounds like a tirade by Jesus against the Scribes and Pharisees. In one sense, it is, but a careful reading of the text reflects the real purpose of this passage. In Matthew 23:8, there is a remarkable change in tone that sneaks up on the reader. Listen carefully: "But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one father – the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be a servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be

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May's Services and Meditations

May 1:
NATIVE AMERICAN
MINISTRIES SUNDAY

Let Us Fish!
John 21:1-19
Pastor Larry

SUNDAY
SERVICES
9:30 AM
IN-PERSON & ONLINE

May 22

Where is the Power?
John 14:23-29
Pastor Larry

May 8: MOTHER'S DAY

So, What is Next, Lord?
John 10:22-30; 13:31-35
Pastor Larry

May 29:

ASCENSION SUNDAY

They're Disrupting Our City
Psalm 97:1-12 & Acts 16:16-34
Pastor Daniel

May 15

What God Called Clean
Psalm 148 & Acts 11:1-18
Pastor Daniel

WEDNESDAY
ONLINE
SERVICES

May 4 at 10:00 AM

See, I Am Making All Things New
Revelation 21:1-6
Pastors Larry and Daniel

May 18 at 10:00 AM

The Lord Opened Her Heart!
Acts 16:9-15
Pastors Larry and Daniel

May 11 at 10:00 AM

Sorry, You Can't Come
Rev. 21:1-6 & John 13:31-35
Pastors Daniel and Larry

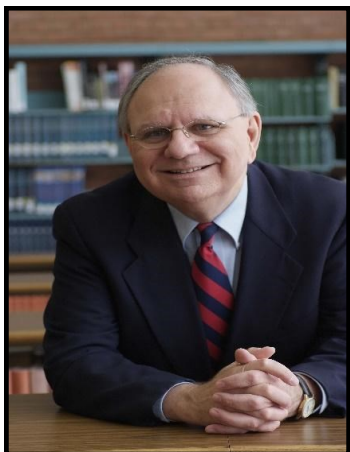
May 25 at 10:00 AM

*The Spirit and the Bride Say,
"Come"*
Rev. 22 & John 17:20-26
Pastors Daniel and Larry

Postponing General Conference May Be A Good Thing

Commentary by the Rev. Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr.

Many appear to see the postponement of the General Conference to 2024 as a bad thing. It may be, but chances are just as great that it will be a good thing. Time seems to help when we seek to discern God's will on difficult issues. *John Wesley's last sermon, preached one week before his death, was from Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near"* (KJV). You recognize this passage from a portion of Isaiah critically influential for New Testament Christians struggling to understand the unfolding meaning of the coming of Christ for their lives.



Our human need for control often resists the need to call upon the Lord and wait for the veil of uncertainty to lift. Our need for certainty invariably outruns our waiting in prayerful discernment. Are decisions now, when we see in a mirror dimly, better than waiting? Let's look back at other pivotal moments in Methodist history to see. For example, what if the 1844 Methodist Episcopal General Conference, in which Methodism split north and south, had been postponed? Does anyone think that after the United States divided over slavery, over 600,000 died in a war about slavery, and slavery was outlawed that the church would have divided for the formation of a more slavery-accommodating denomination?

Or, what if the 1939 Uniting Conference that approved a racially segregated church structure had been postponed to 1969? Does anyone think that in 1969 Methodism would have established a segregated jurisdiction for African

Americans? Some talk about the anguish and uncertainty of delays. It depends on your perspective. What about the anguish in 1939 of the 47 African American General Conference delegates who all voted against the exclusionary plan or abstained? When the conference rose to sing in celebration, "We Are Marching to Zion," those 47 delegates remained seated. Some wept, including one of the most admired Methodists of her time, Mary McLeod Bethune.

People on differing sides seem to consider this time of delay as a time of such uncertainty that it immobilizes energy for mission. Some disaffiliating churches said the debate had become a distraction from their mission. Really? Churches are likely to be distracted from their mission when their leaders are. Most churches put their mission far ahead of issue debates. After the turmoil of the 2019 General Conference spread rapidly, some bishops immediately scheduled meetings to hear concerns. At one event, a bishop asked the laity and clergy gathered what had happened in their churches in the two weeks since the General Conference. After some silence, people told many stories of their continuing ministries but not even one had let the recent actions of General Conference delegates keep them from their mission tasks.

Ministry goes on. And pandemics, authoritarian regimes and atrocities of war have a way of putting into perspective our denominational struggles. Yes, in these present moments I think time is helping many United Methodists put things in a broader view. Even some whose views align with those calling for division recognize the difference between what they are hearing and the grace-filled, loving and open Methodism they cherish. It's not that the contentious issues of today are not important. They matter but are not the heart of what Jesus taught. John Wesley always feared that secondary things would overshadow Wesley's abiding passion that all come to know the love of God revealed in Christ. I pray that we attune ourselves now to the grace we know in Jesus Christ and to Wesley's passion for spreading that good news to all.

Weems is distinguished professor of church leadership emeritus and senior consultant of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

2022 Annual Conference

Registration to Annual Conference is open! Registration links are available at www.dscumc.org/ac. All voting members have the option of participating in person at the Mesa Convention Center *or* online via Zoom. Regardless of online vs. in person attendance, voting members will need to bring/use an electronic device that can access the internet for voting purposes.

Observers may also attend the Mesa Convention Center or watch the live stream at www.dscumc.org/ac. They only need to register if they are attending in person and they should use the Observers Registration link.



May 14, 2022, 9:00 AM-Noon: Pre-Conference Briefing & District Meetings (*online only*) *

June 8, 2022, 10:00 AM-Noon: Clergy Executive Session (*online only*)

June 8, 2022, 10:00 AM-Noon: Laity Session (*online only*)

June 10, 2022, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Plenary Session

June 10, 2022, 7:00 PM: Memorial Service (*in-person at First UMC in Mesa and livestreamed at dscumc.org/ac*)

June 11, 2022, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Plenary Session

June 11, 2022, 7:00 PM: Ordination Service (*in-person at First UMC in Mesa and livestreamed at dscumc.org/ac*)

* *Voting members should plan on attending the Pre-Conference Briefing.*

In addition to learning about the upcoming legislation and other important information to prepare for Annual Conference, this briefing includes a voting practice opportunity with their electronic device.

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month



May is designated Asian Pacific Heritage Month by Congress. Asian Pacific Islanders are not from one country, or even from one continent. The people we honor during this month are from the continent of Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Polynesia. This category includes people from China, India, Hawaii, and several places in between. During this month we remember the Japanese immigrants who were instrumental in finishing the transcontinental railroad. We remember the presence and contributions made in how we cultivate land, in developing technologies, and the influences in cooking and art.

Quick links: <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/resourceumc.org/en/content/resources-for-dismantling-aapi-racism>

As we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in our congregations, we are reminded that the image of God is revealed in all of us. This is why during this month we might experience worship

in new ways and even sometimes in different languages. When we love one another with the love of God there is room for all to worship with our unique voices. When we worship with all of our unique voices, we are better able to reflect God's image.

United Women in Faith



United
Women
in Faith

READING PROGRAM FOR 2022 by Billie Larime

Not Your Princess:

Voices of Native American Women by USA Lisa Charley-Boy and Mary Beth Leatherdale.

(Leadership Development) Want to know more about Indigenous women across North America? Read this collection of poems, essays, interviews and art. Sometimes angry, often reflective, but always strong, the women in this book will give readers insight into the lives of women who have been virtually invisible. Found in the Fitch Library along the UMW West Wall.

RESPONSE (the magazine of women in mission) by K Roemmich

Big news—announced in the March/April 2022 issue of RESPONSE. United Methodist Women are changing the name they will be known by and also the symbol associated with their organization. Beginning this year the organization will be known as “United Women in Faith”. And the symbol is somewhat shaped like a flower with a clear path between the petals that creates a cross. The petals are in yellow, blue, red and green and symbolize the diversity we aim for in the persons we attract, and also in the ways we invest in various causes. It is about faith, action and sisterhood. The “legal” name will remain United Methodist Women and is the official women’s organization of the United Methodist Church.

Over the past 150 years the organization has had more than 25 names. And the changes in the world and how we relate to each other has had more changes during that time period. As an organization we are trying to become more inclusive with this rebranding process. It allows the organization to welcome women of diverse backgrounds and women at different stages in their lives. We will meet them where they are.

MISSION GIVING BY UNITED METHODIST WOMEN (UNITED WOMEN in FAITH)

When you look at the world you find places almost all over the globe where United Methodist Women has donated to missions. During 2020 and 2021 more than \$9,000 million was distributed to 226 national and international projects and partners. Just during this past year money was sent to 33 different projects in Asia and the Pacific Islands, to 25 projects in Africa, to 6 projects in South America, 5 projects in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, and 5 in Europe, 1 mission outreach in the Middle East, and to 121 projects in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. United Methodist Women in the past and United Women in Faith in the future are very generous in mission giving.

MISSION U AT RED MOUNTAIN UMC THIS SUMMER

During the last two years United Methodist Women was not able to have any in-person Mission u studies because of Covid. On June 24 & 25 we will hold an in-person study at Red Mountain UMC on Luke 13. Cost is only \$70.00 for three meals, worship, art projects, fellowship and the study sessions on a Friday from 1:00 to 8:15 p.m. and a Saturday from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

For those wishing to use Zoom we have a virtual study on Luke 13. To be held on Friday from 5:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on July 22 & 23. Cost is only \$20.00. All are welcome to attend, but you must register. Scholarships are available through the Velda Rose United Women in Faith. For questions and registration contact Billie Larime.

PRAYER FROM RESPONSE MAGAZINE by Tara Barnes, Editor of Response

Comforting God. As we embark on our new journey as United Women in Faith, we look to you

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Church News

Native American Ministries Sunday



umcgiving.org/giveNAMS

The month of May has been set aside in the United Methodist Church to celebrate the heritage of our American

Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) brothers and sisters. There is much to venerate, but here is some of the reality of their real life context and the problems they face.

As a result of historical trauma, chronically underfunded federal programs, and broken promises on the part of the US government, American Indians and Alaska Natives experience many health, educational and economic disparities compared to the general population.

There are 565 federally-recognized tribes in 35 states in the United States. A full list can be downloaded from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

US Census Bureau statistics estimate that about 1.5 percent of the US population – around 4.5 million individuals – self-identifies American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) descent.

Of these, an estimated 1.9 million are eligible for federal services. In 2000, 47 percent (continued on page 10)

Prayer

In need of prayer? Call head of the UWIF Prayer Chain Ruth Mogen at or the Church Office at (480) 832-2111.

The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a righteous man (believer) can accomplish much [when put into action and made effective by God—it is dynamic and can have tremendous power]. James 5:16 AMP

Monthly Prayer for Churches



Wesley & Golden Gates Community

UMOM New Day Center, Phoenix

Justa Center, Phoenix

In This Issue...



- Native American Ministries Sunday
- 2022 Annual Conference
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

United Women in Faith (continued)



United Women in Faith

for hope. The challenges we face are new and as old as time. Sometimes we feel lost. Sometimes we lose faith. Help us remember that our faith in you is our greatest strength, that our faith in one another can change the world. We must carry on the legacy of hope entrusted to us as women of faith, followers of Christ, as children of God, as leaders of a vision for the kingdom. Gracious God, envelope us in your love, let it feed us, heal us, open us to all that could be. Fill us with a love so full we can't help but share it with others.

United Methodist Men



Thanks to the continued support of our fundraisers we were able to use some of the proceeds to replace the pump in our fountain and some of our shrubs and flowers around the walkway into the church.

We prepared breakfast on Easter Sunday and everyone that ate said they enjoyed the meal.

The UMM thank Robert Richter, Robert's Catering

service, for supplying the Waffles, Sausages, strawberries and blueberries for the meal.

Our next activity is planned to be an ice cream social.

Our meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 11:30 AM in Moore Hall. A light lunch will be served. All men are invited. Come and enjoy some fellowship.

Bruce D. Williams
President UMM

Do We Talk the Talk or Walk the Walk? continued



exalted." The passage is aimed not just at the Pharisees and Scribes, but also Christians! Everyone is now in one group!

This passage is revolutionary! The Christian has only one teacher, and that teacher is Jesus. There is only one Father in the faith, and that is God. The model

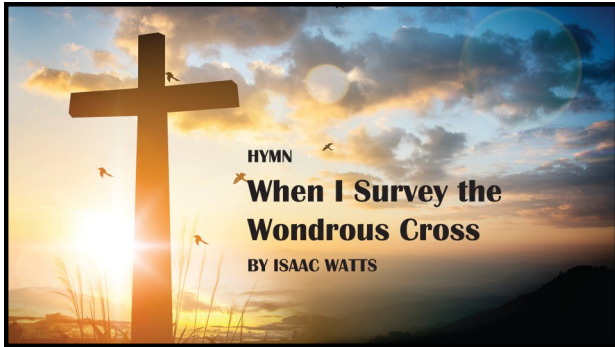
of a healthy Christian church is not one in which an authoritative figure, whether a "preacher," "pastor," or "doctor," dispenses truth to passive believers. In the very best sense, the Christian community is one in which all are set on an even footing as learners, teachers, and children of God. The proper recognition of divine authority, God's authority, keeps a proper perspective on all human authorities. For all of us, Christ is our leader and teacher, and the authority to who we are accountable.

So why is it important to practice what we preach and teach? The most basic reason is the integrity of our faith. We are the body of Christ for the world. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus tells us, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid." If the words we speak do not match the behavior we live, then

how will people be attracted to the light? The issue was not what the Scribes and Pharisees were teaching, but how they were living their lives. Consistency and wholeness were missing. What about us? In a world that is constantly giving us messages that it is somehow "ok" to be of two minds, to separate "being" and "doing," to live a life on the outside that does not match our inside, is not being spiritually authentic. Yet it is more than a spiritual issue. The lack of congruence leads to emotional erosion and low self-esteem for both the individual and the community.

Jesus' perspective is this: True authenticity is evidenced in service, and in God's plan, those who seek genuine honesty in life avoid pretention. These are the true leaders. For us, who have the privilege of reading Matthew's Gospel, if we are honest we discover that we are not so different than those so-called "bad guys" of the first century. In many ways, we are just like them. What does Jesus say on this point? He said your honesty must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. The upshot is this: We need to do a lot less talking the talk, and a lot more walking the talk!

See you in church!



A beloved hymn of the Easter season, this was written centuries ago by Isaac Watts. When he was a young 22-year old man in his hometown Southampton, England, he wrote several hymns for his hometown church. He became a minister at the age of 25. Around this time, his brother Enoch wrote a letter to him urging him to publish his hymns. He wrote, "there is great need of a pen, vigorous and lively as yours, to quicken and revive the dying devotion of the age."

Before Watts' time most hymns were merely recitations of the Psalms and other poetry in the Bible. As still happens in many churches today, many church leaders felt more comfortable just sticking

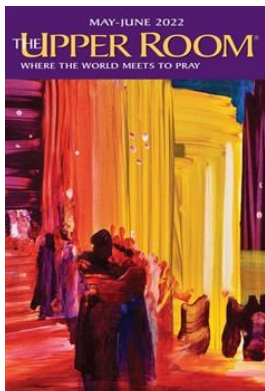
with the old, familiar ways of worship even if it meant that worship became dry and lifeless.

On the other hand, Watts' hymns like "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed", "O God Our Help in Ages Past", "We're Marching to Zion" and "Joy to the World" were revolutionary in their day because they were filled with Biblical truths, but they could be sung with the fervor and emotion that should accompany true worship.

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" was included in the first book of hymns that Watts published in 1707, with the original title "Crucifixion to the World, by the Cross of Christ". It also included the 4th verse below which we don't see very often today. The book was an instant and resounding success and to this day many call this hymn one of the finest in the history of the church in England.

For many years, our choirs at Velda Rose have performed it during the Easter season. I felt our Canterbury Bell Choir, who performed it on Palm Sunday, brought a special spiritual quality to it.

May-June Upper Room



The May-June 2022 Upper Rooms are available in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings, or in the office during office hours.

If you are homebound and would like to receive the Upper Room by mail, please contact the office to be put on the mailing list.

VRUMC Food Pantry

The Food Pantry at Velda Rose UMC provides non-perishable food to those who come seeking assistance. If you can donate some of the following items, we would greatly appreciate it:



- * Small Jars of Jam/Jelly
- * Boxes of Cereal
- * Peanut Butter
- * Canned Vegetables

Donations can be brought to the Church Office, or put in the Food Pantry Baskets in front of the Sanctuary.

Selected Fast Facts on Native American and Alaska Native Peoples



You can also give to the denomination-wide Native American Comprehensive plan at advance.umcmmission.org/p-649-native-american-comprehensive-plan.aspx

of AI/ANs lived on reservations or other US Census-defined tribal areas (US Dept. of Education).

28.3 percent of AI/ANs are below the age of 18 (2008 Census). The media age of this group is 29.7 years (2009 census).

Over 1.1 million AI/ANs are under the age of 24.

The poverty rate among AI/ANs in 2009 was 23.6% (2009 census), and 32.4% of the under-18 AI/AN population lives in poverty (NCAI Policy Research Center). Average AI/AN household

income is \$33,300, while the national average is \$46,200.

According to the 2000 Census, Indians living in Indian Country have incomes less than half the national average (Duthu, N. Bruce. *American Indians and the Law*, New York: Penguin Group, 2008. Print. Page 118).

Alcoholism mortality rates are 514 percent higher than the general population.

Suicide rates are more than double, and Native teens experience the highest rate of suicide of any population group in the United States.

Diabetes incidence is 177 percent higher, with the highest rate of type 2 diabetes of any specific population in the U.S.

Tuberculosis incidence is 500 percent higher.

About 2 percent of US children are American Indian/Alaska Native, but AI/ANs represent 8.4 percent of the children in foster care. (NICWA, & Kids Are Waiting, 2007)

Clearly, one of the great national tragedies is the state of the original inhabitants of this land, the indigenous people of the United States. They are not called the "silent minority" for nothing. When will we learn?

Facts and information from the Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute

*in loving
memory*

George Potter 10/2021

Joseph Horrall 4/5/2022

Richard Mendrop 3/5/2022

Fern Killgrove 4/25/22

Roy Sager 3/6/2022



Joan Most	5/1	Barbie Van Hoy	5/21
Marcus Bentley	5/6	Marie Pettegrew	5/22
Barbara Squier	5/7	Alan Bergman	5/23
Jan Leith	5/8	Becky Blodgett-Knight	5/24
Arlene Oisten	5/9	Cal Walters	5/24
Phyllis Hendricks	5/11	Steve Schmuki	5/25
Donna Collins	5/12	Barbara Bomgaars	5/27
Ann Macha	5/12	Marjorie Book	5/27
Betty Sayers	5/13	Arlene Rhoades	5/27
Debra Norris	5/14	Terry Manley	5/28
Marj Troute	5/15	John Inglebright	5/29
Karen Oakes	5/16	Paula Kaipelea	5/30
Dick Gissel	5/20		



Howard & Cori Orr	5/3	Richard & Ellen Stanart	5/6
Walter & Leona Schott	5/5	Paul & Cynthia Borneman	5/29



VELDA ROSE

United Methodist Church

5540 E. Main Street
Mesa, Arizona 85205-8720
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Rev. Grant J. Hagiya, Resident Bishop
Rev. N. Susan Brims, East District Superintendent
Rev. Dr. Larry R. Norris, Senior Pastor
Rev. Daniel Gómez, Associate Pastor
Ministers, Every Member of the Congregation

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Join us online for our midweek devotion
each Wednesday at 10:00 AM,
and 9:30 AM Sunday morning services

In-person *and* online at
facebook.com/veldaroseumc/
or on the church website:
veldarose.org/connect/watch/

NEXT ISSUE

Items considered for the
June Vision

must be submitted by
Tuesday, June 14, 2022.

Please **e-mail** Jessica at
officeadmin@veldarose.org
with your newsletter articles.